

## STOP THE CELL PHONE INVASION!

"Can you hear me now?" Picture a plane full of people saying this. As a Flight Attendant for America West Airlines, I feel that the recently issued Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) that would relax restrictions on cell phone use, opening the door for passengers to use cell phones in flight, is a bad idea.

The use of cell phones in the air is not only inappropriate but unsafe. We have no data to suggest that cell phone use doesn't interfere with aircraft navigation systems. The NPRM claims that cell phone use among passengers would enhance security onboard because it would allow better communication with people on the ground. By the same token, it would enable terrorists on board to communicate with one another to execute a hijacking more effectively. They could, for example, simply take out a Blackberry to email the positions of flight crew or someone they suspect to be a Federal Air Marshal or to communicate if the flight deck door were being opened for a pilot.

The mixture of thin air, cramped quarters, frayed nerves and alcohol consumption already pushes passengers to the limit. Add multiple, high volume cell phone conversations and the recipe for disaster is complete.

The introduction of cell phone use in the cabin will not only increase tension among passengers, it will compromise flight attendants' ability to maintain order in an emergency. Imagine trying to prepare passengers for an evacuation and you're getting the 'wait a minute finger wag' while the people in that area miss out on crucial information you are trying to communicate. Surely, everyone, by now, has been annoyed at someone else's cell phone ring/conversation in a crowded restaurant, theatre, subway, etc. Just imagine that ring/conversation being mere inches away from your head AND on both sides of you while occupying the middle seat on a three across configuration for a 5 hour flight from L.A. to New York...hideous.

The NPRM would leave it up to flight attendants to police the use of cell phones onboard the aircraft compromising our ability to maintain a safe, secure cabin environment and to conduct emergency evacuations. This would be impossible with a 3 person cabin crew for 150 passengers. It would make an already tense cabin environment even more stressful.

Please reconsider and keep our flights as safe as possible.

Thank you,  
Steve Bown  
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